

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) An assembly defining longitudinal, lateral, and transverse directions substantially orthogonal to one another, the assembly comprising:

a vehicle comprising

at least one wheel supporting at least a portion of the weight of the vehicle on a supporting surface, and

a cargo area having a length in the longitudinal direction, a width in the lateral direction, a first end, and a second end longitudinally opposite thereto; and

a flexible member having a first portion extending in the longitudinal and lateral directions to substantially completely cover the cargo area and a second portion connecting to the first portion proximate the second end and extending therefrom a length sufficient to pass around the second end to a location of capture thereof between the at least one wheel and the supporting surface.

2. (original) The assembly of claim 1, further comprising a friction-reducing member positioned at the second end and extending at least the width of the cargo area.

3. (original) The assembly of claim 2, wherein the vehicle is selected from the group consisting of a pickup truck, a flatbed truck, a van, and a trailer.

4. (original) The assembly of claim 3, wherein the vehicle provides an opening proximate the second end to pass cargo for removal.

5. (original) The assembly of claim 4, wherein the friction-reducing member comprises a material selected from the group consisting of woods, metals, polymers, elastomers, and composites.

6. (previously presented) The assembly of claim 5, wherein the friction-reducing member comprises a material selected from the group consisting of polyethylenes and fluoropolymers.

7. (original) The assembly of claim 5, wherein the friction-reducing member comprises at least one roller extending in the lateral direction.

8. (original) The assembly of claim 5, wherein the friction-reducing member comprises multiple, separable sections positioned along the second end of the cargo area in the lateral direction.

9. (original) The assembly of claim 5, wherein the flexible member comprises a material selected from the group consisting of fibers, polymers, elastomers, woven fibers, and composites.

10. (original) The assembly of claim 8, wherein the flexible member is formed of an elastomeric material selected to store energy for increasing a force urging removal of a load from the cargo area.

11. (currently amended) An assembly comprising:

a vehicle comprising

at least one wheel supporting at least a portion of the weight of the vehicle on a supporting surface, and

a cargo area having a length, a width, a first end, and a second end opposite the first end;

a flexible member having a first portion extending to substantially completely cover the cargo area and a second portion connecting to the first portion proximate the second end to extend therefrom a length sufficient to pass around the second end of the cargo area to be captured between the at least one wheel and the supporting surface; and

a friction-reducing member positioned proximate the second end to extend substantially the width of the cargo area.

12. (original) The assembly of claim 11, wherein:

the vehicle is a pickup truck having a tailgate defining the second end of the cargo area, the tailgate having a left side and a right side; and

the friction reducing member further extending beyond the left side and the right side of the tailgate.

13. (original) The assembly of claim 12, wherein the friction-reducing member is positioned between the rearwardmost edge of the tailgate, when in the open position, and the second portion of the flexible member.

14. (original) The assembly of claim 13, wherein the friction-reducing member comprises a material selected from the group consisting of woods, metals, metal alloys, polymers, elastomers, and composites.

15. (original) The assembly of claim 14, wherein the friction-reducing member comprises at least one roller.

16. (previously presented) A method comprising:

providing a vehicle comprising at least one wheel supporting at least a portion of the weight of the vehicle, and a cargo area having a length, a width, a first end, and a second end opposite the first end;

providing a flexible member having a first portion, and a second portion extending therefrom to a distal edge;

covering at least a portion of the cargo area with the first portion of the flexible member; depositing a load directly onto the first portion of the flexible member to be supported by the cargo area;

moving the load and vehicle to a desired location;

extending the second portion of the flexible member from the cargo area, around the second end of the cargo area, to a location behind the at least one wheel;

backing the vehicle over the distal edge to capture the second portion between the at least one wheel and a supporting surface therebelow; and

continuing to back the vehicle until a length of the first portion passes under the second end and a desired amount of the load has been discharged from the cargo area.

17. (original) The method of claim 16, further comprising providing a friction-reducing member having a length equal to at least the width of the cargo area.

18. (original) The method of claim 17; further comprising positioning the friction-reducing member at the second end of the cargo area to reduce friction as the second portion of the flexible member slides around the second end of the cargo area during backing of the vehicle.

19. (original) The method of claim 18, further comprising securing the second portion of the flexible material over the top of the load prior to moving the vehicle.

20. (cancelled)

21. (new) An assembly defining longitudinal, lateral, and transverse directions substantially orthogonal to one another, the assembly comprising:

a pickup truck comprising a rear wheel supporting at least a portion of the weight of the pickup truck on a supporting surface;

the pickup truck further comprising a cargo area having a length in the longitudinal direction, a width in the lateral direction, a first end and a second end longitudinally opposite each other, the second end comprising a tailgate in an open position;

a flexible member comprising a first portion extending in the longitudinal and lateral directions to substantially completely cover the cargo area and a second portion connecting to the first portion proximate the second end;

the flexible member wherein the second portion extends from the first portion, around the second end of the cargo area, and is gripped between the rear wheel and the supporting surface;
and

a cargo positioned directly on the first portion of the flexible member.